



March 15, 2017

SABBATH IS QUIET

“Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop.” - Ovid

The practice of allowing nature to renew itself in fishing and agrarian societies has had practical and spiritual purposes. From the time of ancient Near East to present-day, societies have held the view that gods and goddesses have been responsible for infusing new life into nature. In Judaism, however, it's Yahweh who institutes the fallow period to help God's people to emulate the Creator who rests on the seventh day.

When we rest, we are fashioning our lives after the Creator who took time off after God had loved creation into existence. We also believe that God's creative work did not end after the seventh day rest. If God's creative work continues, it tells me that when we take time off, it does not mean everything we have to do is completed. It only means that we are cultivating the habit of saying that we are satisfied with what we have done for the moment, and that we will gladly continue after we have rested. God's seventh day rest was, therefore, a break between what God did at the beginning and what God continues to do.

What can we learn from the Creator resting after the completion of God's primordial work? If God continues to create, then the intentional rest by God is only meant to teach us mere mortals that we need to take a break from time to time. When and how do we rest when it does not seem that our work is done? Let's take our cue from the author of life, time and all that exists.

Despite our assumption that we are the only people who can do the best job in a given situation, when we take time off it gives us the freedom to admit that we are mortals who require rest. Surprisingly, when we rest, we admit that we are finite human beings and not *doing beings* that function like machines. While all the responsibilities we have are important, rest affords us the opportunity to re-prioritize all the life-affirming aspects of our existence. During restful times, we allow God to be God in our lives. Mindful and regular practice of resting is godliness.

When we rest, we also allow God to renew and empower us for our daily tasks and simultaneously, gain *new perspectives on the familiar*. When we rest, we grow to appreciate the meaning of work. It's when we are deliberate about taking a break that we begin to dip into God's regenerative power. It's the life force that sustains and animates all

that there is and ever will be. May we bear abundant crops from resting for after all, the Creator rested on the seventh day.

Peace,

PO:

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